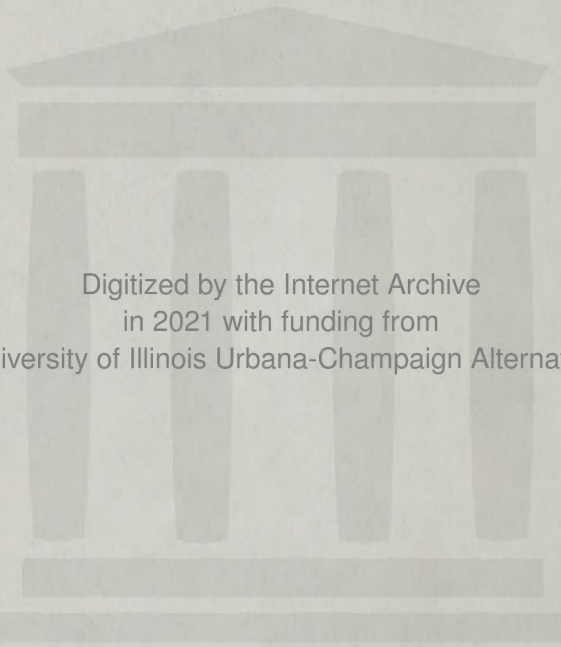


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B. (R. R.)

CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TOILS.

A Farce, with Songs.

IN ONE ACT.

BY
R. R. C. *St. James*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89 STRAND, LONDON

WALTON

HIS OWN COPY

A. 1811

1811

1811

THOMAS WALTER RAY
1811

"CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TOILS."

A Farce, with Songs.

IN ONE ACT.

BY
R. R. C.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89 STRAND, LONDON.

“CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TOILS.”

CHARACTERS.

MR. BOISTEROUS, (<i>a Publican</i>)	.	.	.	.
MRS. BOISTEROUS (<i>his wife</i>)	.	.	.	.
HELEN (<i>their daughter</i>)	.	.	.	.
JEMMIE (<i>a lawyer's clerk</i>)	.	.	.	.
BILL SNAFFLES (<i>the ostler</i>)	.	.	.	.
JOE FOREST (<i>a Gamekeeper</i>)	.	.	.	.
SAM ROOTS (<i>a Gardener</i>)	.	.	.	.

COSTUMES.

MR. BOISTEROUS.—Knee breeches, stockings and shoes, shirt sleeves, and waistcoat.

MRS. BOISTEROUS.—A night dress, a shawl, a large cap with enormous frills, large slippers.

HELEN.—Short muslin dress and cap.

JEMMIE.—Plaid trousers, dark coat, loud waistcoat and necktie, black hat.

SNAFFLES.—Breeches and gaiters, &c., horsey.

FOREST.—Knee breeches, gaiters, green-broad hat.

ROOTS.—Coloured trousers, very thick shoes, a gardener's apron, straw hat.

"CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TOILS."

The scene represents a garden; at the back of the stage, R.—a small house, with doors and windows shut, over the door, written in large letters, "The Two Pigeons!"—to the left of the stage, a low hedge and trees—night.

The door of the house opens slowly, and BOISTEROUS comes out with a dark lantern in his hand, advances slowly, looking about.

MR. B. Yes, I am not mistaken; there is some treason going on, and my wife, or Helen are at the bottom of it. It was *not* the "wind" that whistled. No, no; it came from human lips, the sound that attracted my attention—and then, that song! Ah, Mrs. B., that pain in your head—that wish of retiring to bed so soon; ah, no, it is not all as it ought to be with you! I don't know what to think, but I feel that something *is* going wrong—and if I find it out—oh, if I catch you (and catch you I shall), you'll pay for all your tricks at one blow, my old gal! (*looking cautiously round he disappears through the trees, L. U. E.*)

MRS. BOISTEROUS *from the house-door, a candlestick in her hand—the shawl hastily put on—which drags on the ground behind her, as she comes slowly forward, looking about.*

MRS. B. I am sure of it; I saw him come out; I pretended not to see him, to be fast asleep; but I watched—oh, I watched him! Little does he think that I watch—what is he up to? what does he do? B, look out, if I

catch you—if—oh, you'll pay dearly for it, I assure you !
(*disappears in the opposite direction, R.*)

Music (a male voice sings inside). Words changed.

“ I wish I were a bird,
That I might fly to thee,
And breathe a loving word,
To one so dear to me ;
And tell her, “ I am he
Who thinks of you all day,
Who all day longs to see
The sunlight fade away.
For, then life is a pleasure,
All else beside at rest,
As he his darling treasure,
Holds to his faithful breast.”
Oh, come my little Nell,
In silence come to me,
Steal forth from thy bower,
I'm waiting here for thee !”

MR. B. (*returning hastily, L., looking round*) Ah, I heard it again ; it came from here. A male voice sung some infernal song, the same I heard before—it is evidently intended as a call for some one—Helen, or—my wife ! (*looks about stage*)

MRS. B. (*cautiously coming through the hedge, R.*) I heard it quite distinctly ; it was here ; it was a man's voice—was it his ? Why does he sing ; is it a signal ? Who can he be waiting for ? (*looks about*) Mr. B, if I catch you—if—there'll be no eyes in your face, and no more hair upon your wicked old head !

(MR. B. and MRS. B. come suddenly face to face, putting the lantern and candle up to each others faces, they look at each other with surprise—music).

MR. B. } You !
MRS. B. }

MRS. B. You here—in search of what ? (*sharply*)

MR. B. Of the d——l ; let me find him. And why are you here pray ? why out of bed in this dark, cold night ? You know you ought not to be out ; (*sneering*) you had “such a great pain in your head ;” you really ought be in bed and asleep by this time.

MRS. B. No doubt you think so, Mr. B, or you would

not have left so cautiously, so softly. Pray, Mr. B, what new idea is this of yours? Why, have you taken to singing at night, and roaming about?

MR. B. You fool, what has got into your head now? Go to bed, *do*, and leave me to my business.

MRS. B. Oh, yes, I daresay. *I'm* to go to bed and leave *you* to whistle, and roam at pleasure — You—Mr. B! how *dare* you own to your wife, with such barefaced impudence, your libertine habits? tell me—(*in a fury*)—*who* waits for you about here?

MR. B. (*with forced calmness*) Go to bed, *do*; don't drive me mad; those are the questions that *I* should ask. Go to bed, or I'll—who is waiting for *me*, ma'am, for *me*? Why did *you* come out? What did *he* sing? (*furiously*) By —, if I catch him—if—if—(*shaking his fist at her*)—by the Lord, there'll be murder!

MRS. B. (*proudly*) Are you *mad*, Mr. B? or are you trying to turn the tables?

MR. B. (*mad with rage*) By Jove! ma'am, if you don't get out of the way I'll—I'll make you. (*goes to her and drags her along.*)

MRS. B. (*struggling*) Mr. B, how dare you?

MR. B. Go to bed—go and cure your headache; let *me* look out for *who* was singing.

MRS. B. (*going*) Very well, Mr. B; very well, I *will* go, but mind—(*aggravatingly*) If I find you out—if I catch you, you silly old fool, if *I* do! (*shaking her hand and candle at him furiously*) I'll—I'll—oh, I'll—(*enters in the house, R., and shuts the door with a bang.*)

MR. B. (*looking after her and imitating*) I'll—I'll—I'll—to the devil with you, and all your sex, you old fool! You are in the plot, I'll swear, if it is not altogether your own. But I'll watch, I'll watch, and watch till the end of time; but I'll find out—the fool, what does she mean? Does she want to take me off the scent? but no, I'll watch, I'll watch till it's day. (*again disappears through the trees L. C.*)

HELEN. (*entering hastily from the house, R., looks round in great anxiety*) Jemmie! my darling, my Jemmie I have heard your voice. You sung; it was our signal. Oh, darling, to wait so long—so patiently. My dear love, I will, I *must* see you. Father and mother are about to-night; what can possess them? both out; are we discovered—are we watched? Are we to pay now for all the happiness we have enjoyed? Oh, my Jemmie, in weal and woe, in good and ill-fortune, I *will* be true to thee.

SONG—"Ever of Thee."

Ever of thee, through life only dreaming,
 Of love and the future, though others are near ;
 Ever of thee, while stars brightly beaming,
 Speaks to the soul, of all that's most dear.
 Softly in my heart, to silence its beating,
 Whispers a voice, thy *true* love for me ;
 In yonder stars, of our next meeting,
 I see the sweet promise, and hasten to thee.
 Slow move the hours, in sadness for me,
 Waiting and dreaming, ever of thee !

Ever of thee, when daylight declining,
 Fading away, far down in the west ;
 Ever of thee, the heart that is pining
 To find on thy bosom, one hour of rest !
 Ever of thee, while faint hope beguiling,
 Points on to one quiet haven for me ;
 Ever of thee, my life calm and smiling,
 One heavenly dream, will glide on with thee.
 Slow move the hours, in sadness for me,
 Waiting and dreaming, ever of thee !

(as the last notes of the song die away, JEMMIE is seen advancing through the hedge, slowly, and very cautiously. He comes near HELEN, who does not see him—he puts one arm gently round her waist, and falls on one knee.)

JEMMIE. Helen !

HELEN. Jemmie, my darling, I have waited for you so long, so anxiously. I fear that we are discovered ; I know we are watched ; what shall we do ? what can we do ? how can we go on meeting in secret ? Oh, Jemmie, I cannot bear to think that we must part ; that we are not to see each other—(weeps)—any—any more !

JEMMIE. Helen, dearest girl, dry your tears. Helen, you know I love you ; and though *circumstances*—hem ! *circumstances*, over which I have no control—hem ! *circumstances* of great importance prevent me at present from openly declaring my love for you, and our engagement ; yet, dearest, were things to come to such a pass, were we to be discovered, do you think, Helen, that I would draw back ? that I *would* hesitate one instant in claiming you as mine own, and sheltering you in my arms, from all the sorrow that might be yours, after the discovery ? No, Helen, no ! judge me better. (*aside*) I can go on, words

cost nothing. I am a gentleman, though misfortune has forced me to an humble position; and as a gentleman, I never shrink from the consequences of my own acts, whatever they may be; but in this case, Helen, my dear love, it would only be to hasten a happiness (*aside*) (the d——l it would) which indeed is more than I deserve (*taking her hand—aside*), and which I'll take care I shall not get, if I can help it!

HELEN. (*aside*) What grace! what sentiments! what charming ways! (*aloud*) Jemmie, you make me so happy, I will bear anything for you, do anything to deserve your love. Oh! Jemmie, you don't know how much I love you!

JEMMIE. Helen, I do know it, from my own heart I know it. (*draws her towards him, and leading her forward, sings in a dismal, doleful voice*)

DUET—AIR: "Sweet Mountain Rose."

JEMMIE. 'Tis happiness to meet love,
When it strikes nine,
Once again to hold thee,
To call thee "mine."
My heart for thee is burning,
My brain is almost turning,
Oh! yes I love thee madly,
My sweet little Nell—
When the night stars are peeping,
'T has always been our meeting;
Oh! time is swiftly fleeting
Our happy time away!

NELLY. I've waited long for thee, love,
Till it struck ten!
I thought you would not come, love,
To see me then—
But you deceive me never,
You're my true love for ever,
From me, no one can sever,
My own darling Jem!
All care thy love dispelling,
All charms thy charms excelling,
'Tis in my heart, thy dwelling,
My own, my darling Jem!

(*The Duet ended, they slowly, arm-in-arm, disappear through the trees. MRS. BOISTEROUS enters as before, at the same time MR. BOISTEROUS approaches from the garden, with a lantern, which, as he rushes on the stage, he opens just*

in his wife's face—from opposite directions, and at the same time, SNAFFLES and FOREST, come running—the former with a whip, the latter with his gun—they all run suddenly against each other; look at one another, in surprise—tableau—music.)

MR. B. (*in a passion*) Here you are again. ma'am! and that infernal song! I know I shall catch him, and, by Jove! I'll make mincemeat of him, whoever, he is—I'll—(*flourishing a stick and the lantern*) Why are you here, ma'am? (FOREST and SNAFFLES draw near, looking much amused and curious)

MRS. B. Ask yourself? If you will go singing love songs at nights, when you think I'm asleep, it is but natural that I should look after my own business and watch you, and try and find out your tricks if I can. Mr. B. I'm your wife, and as such, entitled to your consideration and respect. If your love has vanished, it is the usual thing with men and I will not complain; but I will not suffer your infidelity to go on unpunished—unpunished in my own house, sir! (*flourishing her candlestick*) Beware, beware how you drive me to extremes—how far you push a desperate woman! (*gesticulating and shaking her frilled nightcap*)

MR. B. (*has been dodging about to avoid Mrs. BOISTEROUS's candlestick*) Ma'am! 'pon my word, ma'am, you are mad. Go in—get away—go to bed—what business have you here, at this hour of the night, in that—dress—go away, I say—go—the devil you won't—wait, I'll make you. (*skirmish between them*)

FOREST. Missus's mad. Let them have it out. But what brings you here, my fine fellow?

SNAFFLES. And, what's that to you, I should like to know, a question I might as well put to you. What brings you here at this hour. Of course you won't tell, no more will I! I'm here because I please —

FOREST. None of your big words, my boy, or I'll teach you to be civil. I daresay you guess what brought me here, and I know what brought you, old fellow. I have spotted you out long ago—you are trying to cut me out with songs, and playing the sentimental; and considering yourself such a fine chap, of course you think you can. but don't try too far, I advise you. Take care, I'm not easily done!

SNAFFLES. All right. Suppose you have guessed my reason for being here: I won't deny it, and I don't see

why I should not be here, any more than you, so let us keep our ground, and no big words about it either, or by Jove I'll — (*shaking the whip significantly, looking at FOREST*)

FOREST. (*going up to SNAFFLES*) I say, you don't mean to hit, do you, eh? (*going closer and lifting up the gun by the muzzle*) Look out! (*both flourishing whip and gun—going to strike each other from the direction where HELEN and JEMMIE have disappeared, the voice of a man singing*)

Come where my love lies dreaming,
Dreaming the happy hours away!

FOREST	}	(<i>stopping suddenly</i>) Ah!
and		
SNAFFLES.	}	(<i>returning hastily</i>) Where?
MR. B.		
and		
MRS. B.		

Music and Song go on.

MR. B. That voice again. From *there*.

MRS. B. No, from *there*! (*pointing in the opposite direction*)

SNAFFLES. (*sentimental*) Ah, from *there*. (*pointing upwards. A pause, all listen*)

FOREST. (*pointing downwards*) No, from *there*.

VOICE. (*inside*) Dreaming the happy hours,
Dreaming the happy hours away.

MR. B. Ah, you rascal! I'll soon teach you to dream about something else. (*furious, turning to MRS. BOISTEROUS*) Well, ma'am, is it *me*, is it *me* that sings? (*shaking her*) Who is it? don't stand there shaking, and staring, like a fool—answer me—who is it? (*shaking her again.*)

MRS. B. (*trembling, has let her candle fall*) Oh! have you forgotten—*Helen!!!* (*runs inside her house.*)

MR. B.	}	(<i>looking at each other</i>) Helen!
SNAFFLES.		
FOREST.		

MR. B. (*looks about in great excitement—goes amongst the trees, and comes out again; while SNAFFLES and FOREST, approach each other*) I can't see him—it is some d——d scoundrel singing to her.

SNAFFLES. Oh! perhaps he's singing her to sleep! (*turns to FOREST, and looking at him steadily awhile*) Then—then it was *not* you?

FOREST. No, nor you?

SNAFFLES. }
and } No! (*shaking hands.*)
 FOREST. }

SNAFFLES. Let us make common cause—let us catch the scoundrel ——

FOREST. Let us find him out, wherever he is; let us not be done, by a stranger—come along.

MR. B. (*returning*) My friends, I cannot find him, yet he must be here, not far off. Let us all go together and look for him in different directions; there is treachery going on, and we must find all out and if we catch him, we—— (*flourishing a heavy stick, and runs into the house*)

FOREST. Oh, if we catch him, we—— (*flourishing the gun above his head*)

SNAFFLES. (*dancing about the stage, flourishing the whip*) Oh, oh! ah, ah! if we catch him, we——

SONG.

FOREST. } We'll hang him, we'll hang him on a sour
and } apple tree—Glory, &c.
 SNAFFLES. } (*they sing and jump round the stage, singing and flourishing above their heads, the whip, and the gun—exeunt, L.*)

MR. B. (*returning from house, leading along ROOTS, who is half-asleep and bewildered*) Now, my man, wake up (*shakes ROOTS, who rubs his eyes*) wake up, I say—wake—wake—wake—there now, are you awake? well then, listen!

ROOTS Ye—e—es; I listen. (*rubbs his eyes*) I'm awake.

MR. B. (*slowly*) My man, murder will happen to-night—murder! (*shouts in his ear*) Do you understand? and we want you to help us.

ROOTS. Mercy! Murder! Murders to be committed, and I'm to help! Oh, lor'! I never murdered anyone in my life—never, indeed—never, master, I——

MR. B. Fool, don't be an ass; we don't want you to do it; we are to do *that ourselves*. (*with great importance*) We only want you to watch—for some one who's here somewhere, and who *must* be found out (*ROOTS seems to go to sleep again—opens and shuts his eyes—yawns aloud*) Do you hear?

ROOTS. Oh, master, yes I hear!

MR. B. You must watch closely—you must hide here, so—— (*stoops low to the ground near the hedge—ROOTS imitates him*) so——

ROOTS. Ye—es. So—(*stoops*)

MR. B. And so—(*creeps along on hands and feet*) if it be necessary to follow.

ROOTS. So, if necessary to follow—(*imitating, goes too close to MR. B., and falls on him.*)

MR. B. (*jumps up and kicks him*) No, fool. So—so—so—wake up!

ROOTS. (*rising and running about*) Ah, I'm awake *now*—indeed I am. Oh, my back!

MR. B. (*goes after him and brings him forwards*) You understand then at last? Watch, and when he comes, take this and stick; (*giving him a thick stick*) and no mercy—hammer! hammer! hammer! (*pretending to beat someone, ROOTS bobs his head down every time MR. B. lifts his stick up*) and calls out loud, so—(*shouts*)—do you hear? so—(*shouts again*)

ROOTS. Yes, master, yes, I hear. (*shutting his ears with his hands*) I—so (*shouts too*)

MR. B. Well, well, all right then, we depend upon you! (*giving him a thump on the back*) (*exit MR. B. L.*)

ROOTS. (*looks round everywhere, rubs his back, scratches his head, looks puzzled*) I am to watch, so—so (*creeps on his hands and feet towards the hedge, turns round and looks about, then thrusting his head and shoulders through the hedge, leaves his feet, legs, and half his back visible to the spectators—a pause—music—ROOTS sneezes once, twice, very loud—FOREST and SNAFFLES rush on the stage with great sticks in their hands, they run directly to the spot where ROOTS thinks himself hidden*)

FOREST. Here, here, we have him—hammer!

SNAFFLES. Hammer. Oh! (*repeated blows fall on poor ROOTS' back. He starts up howling, runs round and round the stage still followed by the two, who, not recognizing him, keep aiming blows at him—all stop at last exhausted.*)

SNAFFLES. } (*recognising*) What? Roots!

FOREST. }

SNAFFLES. Ah! ah! ah! Roots, poor fellow, is that you? How do you feel? Ah, ah, very uncomfortable, I should think! Ah, ah!

ROOTS. Oh, my back!

FOREST. Ah, ah, his back. Poor Roots!

SNAFFLES. }

FOREST. }

Ah! ah! ah! (*laughing, holding their sides*)
(*noise heard from inside, loud words—HELEN rushes wildly*)

on the stage and falls on her knees between FOREST and SNAFFLES)

HELEN. Save him, oh, save him! My love, my husband
Oh, save him! (*supplicating*)

FOREST. Who?

MR. B. (*enters, L., dragging after him JEMMIE, who struggles to get free—his collar is torn, and hangs on one side. His hat is crushed over his eyes—his coat is torn*) No use struggling, my man, you are caught at last, and you are not going to get out of it so easily as you think. You blackguard, how dare you intrude on my premises at night, and win secretly my daughter's affections? I'll—

HELEN. Father! father, hear me. He—I—have done nothing wrong; his intentions towards me have ever been honourable. He would have made me his wife before, but—(*looks at JEMMIE*) *circumstances—yes, circumstances—(hesitating, looks at JEMMIE, who makes signs to her to hush)* over which he had no control, and—oh, father, let him tell you. Jem! don't let them misjudge you so, Jem—oh! (*supplicating.*)

JEMMIE. (*who has been making signs to HELEN to hush, to no purpose, now looks round desperately, and struggling to free himself*) My dear girl, my dear sir, I never meant—indeed, never! it's all a mistake. (*with one last effort he succeeds in freeing himself from MR. B's grasp and runs away, but in his confusion he runs towards the house, the door of which opens, and MRS. B in night-dress and night-cap, candlestick in hand, comes out just in time to catch the frantic JEMMIE in her arms. Struggle between the old lady and JEM. MR. BOISTEROUS and the others bring him back between them—JEM strikes blows in every direction.*)

MR. B. No, no, it's no use, my young fellow, it's all up, you are caught—caught in your own toils. Here, my friends, here, I surround him, and mind, use your stick if he attempts to escape again, look out, I will hold him. Now let us hear what he has to say — (*Music band "Hard Times."*) MR. BOISTEROUS, c., *holding JEM by the neck, FOREST and SNAFFLES near JEM—ROOTS at a distance, rubbing his back still, and shaking his fists now and then at JEM—MRS. BOISTEROUS a little to the front, on MR. BOISTEROUS's side, holding her candle up high, looking on the group—HELEN on her knees by her mother, burying her face in her dress—music.*)

MR. B. Now, my fine fellow, find your tongue,
And at once is it true what my daughter says?

And *have you* promised to make her your wife?
Speak out!

JEMMIE. I—hem! I, my dear sir! indeed I cannot marry
—I *never* intended —

FOREST.

SNAFFLES.

ROOTS.

} (*shaking sticks at him all at once and groaning*)

HELEN. (*screams*) Ah!

MRS. B. (*My child! (touching her on the head.)*)

MR. B. (*sternly*) No equivocating, sir, answer me. Did you mean well by my daughter? Did you intend making her your wife, or are you a scoundrel, and must I treat you as such? Take care; I'll — (*shakes his fist in JEM's face.*)

JEMMIE. (*very frightened—shutting and opening his eyes, when MR. BOISTEROUS's fist is too close*) Well, sir, I—yes—I—wait till my affairs are settled; till *circumstances over which I have no control* have changed, and, I'll—hem—I'll —

MRS. B. No! no waiting, sir! You did not wait for circumstances before you came into *my* house—no waiting now—answer here, before witnesses—promise to marry my daughter, Helen, or—by Jove! I'll —

HELEN. (*screams, starts up, and runs to JEM—MRS. BOISTEROUS lets her candle fall, and goes to her husband, and talks to him*) Jem, dearest Jem, don't let them treat you so—tell them—tell my father, all you have told *me*—all the nice promises you have made me—say it, Jem darling, and father'll be satisfied.

MR. B. (*forcing NELLY away from him*) Silence girl, silence, and away from here; let me settle it all with this blackguard, for I fear he is nothing else.

HELEN. Oh, father!

MRS. B. Oh, Boisterous!

MR. B. (*mad with rage*) Hush! women—hush! go to the d—! (*pushing them away*) Now, sir, *will* you answer me? will you marry my daughter? Not that I like that it should be so; but *circumstances over which I have no control*. (*imitating JEMMIE*) compel me to submit—leave me no choice—so answer, sir! Yes, or No! (*all shake their fists and sticks at JEMMIE.*)

FOREST.

SNAFFLES.

ROOTS.

} Yes, or No?

JEMMIE. *makes one last effort to free himself—looks round but sees no escape*) Well—ye—e—s—I suppose I

must—I'll marry, hem! Ah, sir! pray consider your position, and mine. I'm a gentleman—I—you—

MR. B. *No more words, sir! I will hear no more; you should have thought of all that before you compromised my girl's reputation—too late now. Nelly, come here. (NELLY goes to him) put your hand in that of the man of your choice. (HELEN gives her hand) And you all come close, and listen to the promise this man is about to make. (to JEM) Sir! before these witnesses do you promise to marry my daughter Helen, towards whom you always had honourable intentions? Do you promise?*

JEMMIE. *(in despair) I promise—no—yes—I promise before these witnesses—I promise to marry your daughter Helen, towards whom, I never—hem! I mean—I always had honourable intentions!*

MRS. B. *(letting him go) That'll do—you may go.*

HELEN. *(clings to him) My darling, my darling Jem! (JEM pushes her away.)*

MRS. B. *(with great emotion, opening her arms) My dear son—I may call you so now—let me kiss you! let my kiss be the first reward for your noble, your manly conduct—and a token of forgiveness for the (whimpers) pain that through you I have suffered, in having my spotless reputation compromised, and my dear husband jealous. One kiss! (goes to embrace him—JEM pushes her back—MR. BOISTEROUS draws her away.)*

MR. B. *Don't be a fool woman—to the d——l with your kisses. (pulling off his hat, and coming forward to the audience)*

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—You, as well as my friends here, are witnesses that this *manly* and *noble* fellow, of the *honourable intentions*, has promised to marry my daughter. Though he is not mine, he is evidently her choice; and, *under the circumstances* (over which I have no control), the least said the soonest mended. We will all be satisfied, and rejoice, for matters *might* have been worse; all I can say is, that if the gentleman himself is not entirely pleased with the fortune that has befallen him, he has only himself to thank, for he has been—

"CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TOILS!"

Now, please join us in the chorus of our last song—

SONG.—AIR: "*It is a School of Jolly Dogs.*"

(All dance off the stage, HELEN and JEMMIE leading, MR. and MRS. BOISTEROUS follow, the others after them—ROOTS the last, jumping about, all flourishing above their heads the sticks, &c.)

CURTAIN.

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